APPLICATION

FOR

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TITLE: ELECTRONIC PROGRAMMING GUIDE WITH NEW
SEASON SERIES FEATURE

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ELECTRONIC PROGRAMMING GUIDE
<u>WITH NEW SEASON SERIES FEATURE</u>

<u>Background</u>

This invention relates generally to electronic programming guides for facilitating the selection and recording of television programs.

5   Electronic programming guides may display a grid of television program times on one axis and channels or service providers on another axis. The grid may include particular programs listed by channel and time of presentation. The user can select any of the programs in 10   the electronic programming guide for automatic viewing or recording. This may commonly be done by simply mouse clicking on the particular program listing to cause the program to be automatically tuned or automatically scheduled for recording or subsequent (future) viewing.

15   Television programs often run through a predefined series of shows called a season. A given television program may appear at a given time on a given day for a plurality of weeks. After the end of the season, a series of reruns of the previous programs may be broadcast. Thus, 20   television program series generally have a season premiere and a season finale that constitute the first and last programs in a given series.

In many cases, users wish to determine when the season premiere will be broadcast since the users may have endured a extended period of reruns, conventionally over the summer. A user may wish to be sure to watch the premiere episode and to thereafter watch the program regularly until reruns start again.

Thus, there is a need for an electronic programming guide that facilitates the selection of season premieres and the capture of ensuing episodes.

Brief Description of the Drawings

Figure 1 is a graphical user interface in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 2 is a graphical user interface in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 3 is a flow chart for software in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 4 is a front elevational view of a processor-based system in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention; and

Figure 5 is a block diagram of a processor-based system in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention.

Detailed Description

Referring to Figure 1, an electronic programming guide graphical user interface 10 may include a series of program

times corresponding to a current time and date and a series
of channels or television service providers such as ABC,
CBS, etc. A plurality of programs may be listed by time
and service provider such as "Who Wants to be a

5   Millionaire" listed from 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. on ABC.

Conventionally, the user may mouse select a given
episode for viewing or recording. In addition, the user
may mouse select a future episode to cause that episode to
be automatically tuned in at its scheduled broadcast time.

10   The graphical user interface 10 includes a plurality
of icons 12, 14 and 16. The icon 12 may be selected by the
user to automatically display any upcoming season
premieres. That is, if the user maneuvers the highlighting
13 over the icon 12 and then mouse clicks on the season

15   premiere icon 12, the user is automatically provided
information about all upcoming season premieres.
Similarly, an ongoing series icon 14 may be provided and a
recommended show icon 16 may be provided.

Each of the icons 12, 14 and 16 may be utilized to

20   preferentially record a given series of programs. Thus,
the icons 12, 14 and 16 may be associated with a record bar
11 of the graphical user interface 10. The user may mouse
click on a given program and then the record bar 11 to
record the program automatically in one embodiment.

25   Similarly, the user may select one of the icons 12, 14
or 16 to automatically record an entire season of

television programs. In accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, when the user selects the season premiere icon 12, the graphical user interface 18, shown in Figure 2, may be displayed in accordance with one
5 embodiment of the present invention.

The interface 18 may provide a listing of all the upcoming television program season premiere episodes. In this hypothetical case, four premiere episodes are upcoming on the dates indicated at 26. Each episode 24 of the
10 series may be scheduled for recording as indicated at 22 or for addition to the user's favorites list as indicated at 23. By mouse clicking on a block 20 that is highlighted, as indicated at 25, the user may cause a check mark 27 or 29 to appear to indicate the user's selection of a
15 particular show 24 for either recording or addition to the user's favorites. Other selection systems may also be used.

When a program is selected for recording, not only is the premiere episode recorded, but all the episodes in the
20 ongoing series may be automatically recorded. This is accomplished using software that is cognizant of (or is able to become cognizant of) the season schedule for the series through its finale.

The user can also mouse select the icon 28 to obtain
25 more information about a given series. The additional information may include program times, channels,

recommendations, preview clips, textual descriptions and rerun schedules, as examples.

Thus, in the embodiment illustrated in Figure 2, the user has selected the Sopranos series for recording as indicated by the check mark 27 and NYPD Blue series for addition to the favorites as indicated by the check mark 29. Thus, all episodes of the upcoming series of Sopranos programs will be automatically recorded and all episodes of the NYPD Blue program are added to the user's favorites. The user's favorites may be indicated by highlighting on the electronic programming guide as the shows appear in one embodiment.

Referring to Figure 3, in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, the season record software 30 initially displays the graphical user interface 10, as indicated at block 32, and particularly provides the icon 12. If the user selects the season premiere icon 12, the software waits for a show selection (diamond 34) after displaying the graphical user interface 18. When a particular show is selected, for example by mouse clicking on the highlighted block 20, the show schedule may be acquired as indicated in block 36. The show schedule may be stored in a database associated with the software 30.

Alternatively, the season series schedule may be acquired through an Internet web site that is available for this purpose. Upon selection of the record feature, the

Internet web site is automatically accessed and the program

schedule automatically downloaded and stored in a database

associated with software 30.

Each of the episodes is scheduled for automatic

5   recording when broadcast on the indicated channel at the

indicated time (block 38). Thereafter, the user may be

given an acknowledgement on the user's display screen

indicating that the season series has been scheduled for

automatic recording (block 40).

10   Referring to Figure 4, in accordance with one

embodiment of the present invention, the software 30 may be

stored on a set-top box 42 that rests atop a television

receiver 41 having a display screen 52. A remote control

unit 44 interface 50 may control the television receiver

15   44, through its interface 48 and the set-top box 42,

through its interface 46. The interfaces 50, 48 and 46 may

be wireless interfaces such as infrared interfaces in

accordance with one embodiment of the present invention.

A plurality of highlight navigation keys 45 and a

20   select key 47 may be provided on the remote control unit 44

for selection of the various icons shown in the graphical

user interfaces of Figure 1 and Figure 2. Particularly,

the navigation keys 45 may be utilized to move the

highlighting 13 or 25 to the desired entry that may be

25   selected using the select button 47.

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Referring to Figure 5, the set-top box 42 may include a processor 54 coupled to a bridge 56. The bridge 56 may couple a graphics accelerator 60 and a system memory 58. The graphics accelerator 60 may be coupled to the television receiver 41 in one embodiment of the present invention.

The bridge 56 may also couple to a bus 64 that may couple to a television tuner/capture card 66. The card 66 may be coupled to a video source such as a cable or satellite receiver as two examples. The bus 64 may also be coupled to a bridge 68. The bridge 68 may be coupled to a hard disk drive 70 that stores the software 30.

The bridge 68 may also be coupled to a bus 74. The bus 74 couples a serial input/output (SIO) device 76 and a basic input/output system (BIOS) storage 82. The device 76 in turn is coupled to the interface 46 that communicates with the remote control unit 44. Particularly, the remote control unit 44 may includes its own interface 50 coupled to a controller 78. The controller 78 receives input commands from a keypad 80.

While the present invention has been described with respect to a limited number of embodiments, those skilled in the art will appreciate numerous modifications and variations therefrom. It is intended that the appended claims cover all such modifications and variations as fall within the true spirit and scope of this present invention.

What is claimed is:

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